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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11, 1940

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

SUBJECT: "In THE LANGUAGE OF THE COOK." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Today, I'd like to have you help me play a little game with words--special words that are used over and over in your cookbooks. It's really a practical game because it will give you the exact meaning for cookery terms such as simmer, pan-broil, sauté, creaming, and others.

Before we go any further, I better explain that this game is not all my own idea. The definitions for these words come from the Bureau of Home Economics of the United States Department of Agriculture.

Let's start off with SIMMERING, and see exactly what a recipe for beef stew means when it says, "simmer until the meat is tender." Actually simmering means to cook in water that is about 185 degrees F. Of course, it isn't so important to have the exact temperature--but a good cook knows that the simmering temperature is just below boiling. When you simmer, you use a slower, more gentle process that gives you tender pieces of meat in the rich gravy of your stew.

Then there's the word PANBROILING--a meat cookery term that you hear used a lot these days. Panbroiling means to cook in a skillet on top of the stove....without added fat--without water--and without a cover. You use the panbroiling method when you cook tender chops and steaks that have fat of their own and are quickly cooked. Be sure to pour off the fat as it renders out--so the meat will not actually cook in fat.

FRYING is altogether different, because it means to cook in fat. Sometimes the fat is deep enough to entirely cover the food--as when you fry doughnuts, pota-

to chips, or croquettes. But you can also fry with shallow fat in a skillet.....
fried apples--fried potatoes. And the word frying is also used when the food is
cooked in its own fat--as sausages and bacon.

SAUTEING is a puzzling word, because it is a cross between frying and pan-
broiling. If you want to be exact--sauteing means to brown food in a little hot fat,
and turn it often to keep it from sticking.

Now let's go on to the word BRAISING. It comes up again and again in both
meat and vegetable cookery. To braise means to brown in a little hot fat, and then
cook the food in steam--with or without added liquid. Swiss steak and pot roast are
good examples of braising. These meat cuts are not very tender to start with--but
properly braised, they can be cut with a fork when you serve them. Braising is also
used for vegetables, such as celery and carrots.

SCALLOPING seems to be a modern word, but it came into use a long time ago.
Originally it meant to cook in a scallop shell or in a dish shaped like a shell.
But today, scalloped foods come to the table in a dish of any shape. You can scallop
most any vegetable or seafood or a combination such as sweetpotatoes and pineapple--
cabbage with spaghetti and cheese--or eggplant and tomatoes. Usually the food is
combined with a sauce--tomato, cheese, or plain white sauce--and baked in the oven
until it is golden brown on top.

Now let's go on to some of the terms used in baking. First of all, there's
the distinction between BATTERS and DOUGHS. You might think that these words mean
the same thing because they are both mixtures of flour and liquid--with other in-
gredients added for leavening and for flavor. But there is a difference. Batters
are thin enough to beat; while doughs are thick enough to knead and roll out.

When you make batters and doughs, it's important to know the exact meaning
of the words that tell you how to mix the ingredients.

There's the word CREAMING, for example. If you're using a cake recipe, cream-
ing means to blend the fat and sugar with a spoon until they're soft and creamy.
However, when you cream vegetables--you combine them with a sauce made of fat, flour,
milk or cream, and seasonings.

When you make biscuits or pie crust, there's the word CUTTING IN. It means
to blend the fat and flour together by cutting the fat into little pieces. You can
use a knife, a fork, a biscuit cutter, or a pastry blender.

STIRRING is a common word, but remember that it is not the same as beating
or folding. When you stir food, you mix it with a circular motion--as when you stir
a soft custard as it cooks.

BEATING is the process you use so often to get air into eggs--to make fudge
creamy--and to blend the ingredients of a cake. It is a regular rhythmic motion
that lifts the mixture over and over. And you can use a spoon--a wire whip-- a
Dover beater--or a mechanical beater.

FOLDING is the gentle process of combining beaten egg whites with the thicker
part of the mixture for a souffle--a sponge cake--or a fluffy omelet. You actually
fold the layers of the thicker mixture into the egg whites. Put the spoon or egg
whip straight down to the bottom of the bowl--turn it under the mass--and bring it
straight up to make a fold.

That winds up the word game. And I hope this set of definitions will make it
easier for you to follow a new recipe.

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